



## DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy No.: DOC 5.6.1	Subject: <b>RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING</b>
Chapter 5: OFFENDER PROGRAMS	Page 1 of 4
Section 6: Religious Programs	Revision Date: Oct. 29, 1999
Signature: /s/ by Director Rick Day	Effective Date: May 1, 1998

### I. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Department of Corrections to make available to offenders confined in its facilities a range of religious services and programs that, to the extent practical, satisfy the beliefs of recognized faith groups confined therein.

### II. AUTHORITY:

53-1-203, MCA. Power and Duties of Department of Corrections

### III. DEFINITIONS:

**Religious Coordinator** means a person whom the facility employs or contracts with to coordinate religious programming for offenders.

### IV. PROCEDURES:

- C Each facility/program must have a policy regarding religious programming
- C It is the responsibility of the Religious Coordinator at each facility to oversee the equitable delivery of religious services and programs.
- C The facility's budget must provide for the functioning of the religious programs.
- C Each facility must ensure that religious services and counseling are available to offenders in that facility.  
Offenders who wish to participate must be provided the opportunity to participate in practices of their religion deemed essential by the governing body of that faith, subject to reasonable constraints necessary to ensure the safety of staff, religious workers and offenders, or the security and safety of the facility.
- C No offender may be compelled to attend any religious program, service, or activity.

Policy No.: DOC 5.6.1	Chapter: Offender Programs	Page 2 of 4
Subject: <b>RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING</b>		

**A. Resources**

1. The facility must provide adequate space for religious programs. To the extent practical, all faith groups must be granted equal access to the religious facilities for their worship activities.
2. Religious accouterments such as skullcaps, head shields, or prayer shawls may be worn during the religious activity insofar as these items conform with safety, security, and orderly operation of the facility. Facility policy will address the storage of religious accouterments and supplies.
3. Offenders may wear religious medallions or ornaments if they do not interfere with the safe and orderly conduct of the facility.

**B. Staffing**

1. In facilities with 500 or more offenders, at least one full-time Religious Coordinator must be employed.
2. The Religious Coordinator must be allowed access to all areas of the facility including locked and medical units in compliance with the facility's safety and security regulations.
3. Under the supervision and direction of the Religious Coordinator, properly screened, interviewed, and trained volunteers and contract employees may be used to minister to the various faith groups. Individuals serving in this capacity must have the written endorsement of their religious certifying body.
4. The Religious Coordinator shall ensure that representatives of all faiths are available to offenders. When a representative of the faith to which an offender subscribes is not available in the facility, the offender must be permitted contact with a properly credentialed representative of that faith via visits, phone, or correspondence to the degree practical.
5. The facility must provide additional resources as necessary to support the religious programs of the facility including security staff supervision of group activities.

**C. Pastoral Services to Offenders**

1. The Religious Coordinator coordinate the delivery of volunteer or contract religious services by qualified representatives of faith groups in the following areas:
  - C religious services
  - C baptism, communion, and other sacramental rituals

Policy No.: DOC 5.6.1	Chapter: Offender Programs	Page 3 of 4
Subject: <b>RELIGIOUS PROGRAMMING</b>		

- C religious education
  - C religious classes, lectures, instruction, and discussions
  - C religious forums
  - C prayer therapy and other religious group counseling
  - C religious choirs, ensembles, and singing groups
  - C self-taught study courses
  - C spiritual maturity groups, and
  - C voluntarily attended instruction in doctrines, rituals, and ideals of various religious faiths.
  
- 2. The Religious Coordinator will post a schedule of all religious activities in locations available to all offenders. All such activities must be supervised by staff. These activities and the staff supervision provided all such programs will, to the extent possible, be allocated equitably among all major faith groups represented in the facility.
  
- 3. The Religious Coordinator will maintain ongoing communications with community religious groups for the purpose of ensuring that the facility's programs are appropriately managed and that when additional resources are needed, they are provided by properly credentialed representatives of that faith group. The Religious Coordinator may, subject to the approval of the Chief of Security or designee, accept donations of supplies, vestments, and other religious materials from community sources.
  
- 4. Special religious services may be authorized by the Facility Administrator or designee provided that all groups generally have equivalent access to such programs if they are available. Special diet and religious banquet programs may be approved in accordance with [DOC 4.3.6, Special Diets](#).

#### **D. Personal Services**

1. The Religious Coordinator must interview offenders referred by staff or on an offender's request for referral to the appropriate representative of the offender's faith. Staff making such requests will provide the Religious Coordinator with sufficient information relative to the offender so that the Coordinator may proceed with a faith referral in an appropriate manner.

2. Offenders may ask to see the Religious Coordinator at any time. The Religious Coordinator must respond to these requests from offenders as promptly as possible according to the urgency of the situation.
3. Facility staff must notify the Religious Coordinator immediately when information is received concerning death or serious illness in an offender's family or other events that may be disturbing to the offender. The Religious Coordinator will then personally contact the offender or have the offender's spiritual representative contact the offender to counsel the offender about the situation.

**E. Services to Locked Units**

The Religious Coordinator must visit offenders classified to a locked housing unit status on a regularly scheduled basis in order to determine the religious needs of this population. Approved, escorted representatives of the offender's faith group may visit the offender in his or her housing unit.

**F. Publications and Other Materials**

Offenders may receive religious publications and other materials that do not have security implications through the office of the Religious Coordinator. The Religious Coordinator must solicit materials for all faith groups and in all languages represented in the offender population, and must confer with the Chief of Security or designee regarding any questionable items. All such incoming items will be opened and inspected in a non-offender contact area of the facility per normal package processing procedures.

**G. Change of Religious Preference or Faith**

Neither the Religious Coordinator nor staff may attempt to influence an offender to change religious preference or faith.

**V. CLOSING:**

Questions concerning this policy shall be directed to the Facility Administrator.